

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1 and 22 are amended, claims 23-30 are added, and claims 3-8 and 19-21 are canceled, without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 9-18 and 22-30 are pending.

Claims 1 and 22 are amended to include the features recited in original claim 3, which was indicated as being allowable. New claims 23-30 include features recited in original claims 9-16 respectively. Thus, no new matter is added.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 3, 5, 7, 8, 10-16 and 18 contain allowable subject matter. As noted above, independent claims 1 and 22 are amended to include the features recited in original claim 3.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 17, 19 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over European Patent Application No. EP 0 989 778 A1 by Seki et al. Applicant respectfully submits that this rejection is rendered moot in view of the incorporation of the features of original claim 3 into independent claims 1 and 22. As implicitly admitted by the Office Action, at least these features are not taught or suggested by Seki et al. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 2, 9-18 and 22-30 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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